UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan Receives 2001 Fulbright Prize for International Understanding

The Fulbright Association awarded the 2001 J. William Fulbright Prize for International Understanding to Kofi Annan, secretary-general of the United Nations, in a ceremony at the Library of Congress on Dec. 3. The prize, which carries a $50,000 cash award, is made possible by a grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation.

(continued on page 12)
Librarian of Congress James Billington Welcomes Fulbrighters and Friends to the Library

As the Librarian of Congress, I am particularly pleased to welcome you this morning to a celebratory occasion that brings together two men known for furthering international understanding through imaginative institutional means. William Fulbright, though he has passed on, continues to be present with us, not only in the name of this prize, but more essentially, in the spirit that created it.

A graduate of the University of Arkansas, a Rhodes Scholar who read history at Oxford, the youngest university president in the United States in 1939, William Fulbright began his long public service in the Congress in 1942 in the House of Representatives. There he co-sponsored the Fulbright-Connally Resolution, which put the Congress on record as favoring membership in a postwar collective security organization. That organization became the United Nations. Elected to the Senate in 1944, he sponsored in 1946 the legislation that created the largest international exchange program in human history, many of whose alumni are with us in the audience today.

The United Nations has grown into a great forum for airing and helping to resolve the world’s most contentious issues. Never has the UN been more determined and better able to address these issues than under the leadership of Kofi Annan, the remarkable secretary-general of the United Nations, whom we honor today. Already recognized by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, the secretary-general and the organization over which he presides have more than earned the plaudits they received. Whether he learned his negotiating skills in his native Kumasi or through his assignments in Addis Ababa, Ismailia, Geneva, Iran, Bosnia, or New York, he is clearly able to persuade disputants and promote civil solutions where others have seen only intractable situations.

It is appropriate to link both the current leadership of Secretary-General Annan and the memory of Senator Fulbright, two successful heroes of international cooperation, with a library that is not only the world’s largest, but is also the most globally inclusive, with 121 million items in 460 languages and 1.4 billion free transactions on its Web site last year.

The Library of Congress, with its unique international collections, special reading rooms for all of the major continents, dedicated curators, and specialists in many of the world’s cultures, symbolizes, in the heart of Washington, our nation and the Congress’s acknowledgment that the accumulated treasures of the world’s wisdom provide the essential foundation for international understanding.
It's a great privilege to be here today not only as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, but as a career diplomat who has long been associated with the Fulbright Program.

It's a commonplace to remark on occasions like this that those who founded something like the Fulbright Program probably never dreamed it might enjoy so much success or such great longevity. Who could possibly have thought, so many decades ago, that we would be standing here, in the year 2001, celebrating Fulbright exchanges by honoring someone so distinguished as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan?

But the truth is that Senator Fulbright and his colleagues undoubtedly did envision that we would be here today, and I'm equally sure that they expected our successors to be here 50 years from now. They were visionaries, and they set the bar very high. Only excellence met their standards.

As a result, the international exchange of scholars, teachers, and students through the Fulbright Program has become the permanent crown jewel in our nation's cultural engagement overseas. One of my proudest moments was helping to found the U.S.-Mexico Fulbright Commission ten years ago. That commission, like so many others, represents a profound bilateral commitment to scholarship.

The real genius of the Fulbright Program is that the rest of the world has made it its own, for we all must recognize that neither leadership nor knowledge is the prerogative of any single nation or people.

Today you are honoring a man who embodies the spirit of the Fulbright Program as well as anyone I have ever known. A scholar himself who has studied extensively in the United States, Kofi Annan represents the best in diplomacy and the best in international understanding.

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congratulating you for your outstanding contributions to international understanding.

These, too, are certainly the kinds of qualities and accomplishments Senator Fulbright had in mind when he created this great program in pursuit of a better world.

Mr. Secretary-General, let me join the Fulbright Association in congratulating you for your outstanding contributions to international understanding.

Ambassador Negroponte, Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs Patricia de Stacy Harrison, and Fulbright Prize Selection Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan.
I am, of course, especially pleased to be able to participate in this important event as we honor Secretary-General Annan, a person held in high regard not only by world leaders, but by all people of good will working toward the goal of international understanding.

Secretary-General Annan's record of accomplishment spans four decades and the seeds of greatness were there even when he was a student at Macalester College, and later, at MIT. I think the world is certainly grateful that the young Kofi Annan had the opportunity not only to experience America, but to impact those with whom he came into contact, helping Americans develop a better understanding of Ghana, its people, and culture. This early investment in international education can be recognized now, today, as the beginning of a lifetime of achievement.

Today the secretary-general will receive the Fulbright Prize for International Understanding. And though we are honoring him, it is all of us, Americans and citizens of other countries, who are the winners, the beneficiaries of this man's dedication and commitment to building a sense of community among nations. How right and fitting that he receive this award. As we have heard, in 1943 then-Representative Fulbright called for the United States Congress to endorse the creation and maintenance of a United Nations organization.

I think you would agree, Mrs. Fulbright, that were the senator here with us today, he would be the first to celebrate the secretary-general's achievements and applaud Chairman Hamilton and the Fulbright Selection Committee's inspired choice for the Fulbright Prize.

Ladies and gentlemen, now more than ever, since the terrible events of September 11, we need to invest in the leaders of tomorrow who will promote international understanding and follow in the footsteps of Secretary-General Annan. For more than half a century, with the support of the American government, governments abroad, and the private sector in the United States and throughout the world, the Fulbright Program truly, as the ambassador has said, is the centerpiece among the international exchange programs sponsored by the State Department. It has worked in a concerted and consistent way to educate, to encourage global awareness, and to develop competencies and understanding of commonalities among people and cultures. A quarter of a million Fulbrighters in our country and in 140 others across the globe are a positive force and resource to their communities and their countries because decisions yesterday were made to invest in the future.

As President Bush and Secretary of State Powell work to strengthen global partnerships to fight terrorism and promote peace, we must do our job. And our job is to invest today so that the world will have continuing generations of leadership who, like Secretary-General Annan, will be there to work as he does for community among peoples and nations. And that work must be continued if we are to live in peace.

I commend the Fulbright Association for their dedication and for honoring Secretary-General Annan and extend our gratitude to the Coca-Cola Foundation for sponsoring this award, and of course, to Dr. Billington for his commitment to the Fulbright Program, twice a Fulbrighter, but most of all, to the Secretary-General. Thank you, thank you, for your leadership.

Our job is to invest today so that the world will have continuing generations of leadership who, like Secretary-General Annan, will be there to work as he does for community among peoples and nations.
Chairman Lee Hamilton Stresses Importance of International Education and Global Cooperation

On behalf of the Fulbright Prize Selection Committee, I am pleased to join you in celebrating the selection of Kofi Annan as the 2001 recipient of the J. William Fulbright Prize for International Understanding.

And I thank Coca-Cola for its generous support of the Fulbright award.

The Fulbright Program is a national treasure. For 55 years, it has sent and received the best and the brightest of American and foreign scholars. The benefits to this nation and other nations are incalculable.

International education is the single most effective tool of American foreign policy. It erodes mistrust, strengthens the bonds of understanding, and encourages reconciliation among peoples. I recall scores of times when foreign policy challenges were made easier because key actors were beneficiaries of exchange programs that helped them to understand other countries better.

Fulbright exchange programs are the gold standard for international education. They deserve our gratitude and support.

Kofi Annan is, in the diplomatic historian's phrase, a man of common sense and uncommon abilities. He is a diplomat who recognizes existing forces and circumstances and makes the most of them for the well-being of mankind. He takes tough positions with a soft voice, and—time and again—sets us on the right course. His quiet voice of compassion, conviction, moderation, and goodwill is heard by many of us above the sound and fury awash in so much of the chest-thumping political rhetoric of the day.

I have especially appreciated that Secretary-General Annan has improved the sometimes difficult relationship between the United Nations and the United States. Thanks to the secretary-general, American political leaders have gained a new respect for the United Nations, and one day they will be as strong in their support for the UN as the American people are.

By honoring Secretary-General Annan we also recognize the institution he leads. The UN is an indispensable institution that deserves strong U.S. political and financial support. If it did not exist, we would desperately need to create it.

The UN serves U.S. interests well. Its broad objectives—to promote peace and security, manage dangerous conflicts, meet transnational challenges, support sustainable development, reduce poverty, care for refugees, and foster respect for human rights—match American objectives.

As the world’s premier diplomatic forum, the UN often enables the U.S. to gain greater leverage and backing for American policy. It facilitates burden sharing among nations and lowers costs for the U.S. than would be incurred if America dealt with problems by itself.

In short, the UN does not subvert, but multiplies American power.

Our goal should be to strengthen the UN and make it more effective.

This is an event to remember. We celebrate the Fulbright exchange program and the contributions of a most extraordinary diplomat and the critical institution he leads.
Fulbright Prize Address

Kofi Annan Speaks to Fulbrighters

Thank you, thank you very much. I don’t know what I can add to all the wonderful things that have been said by the lady and the gentlemen on the podium with me, and also the very eloquent statement made by the Chairman of the Selection Committee, Lee Hamilton, and of course, by the President of the Fulbright Association.

But let me simply say that I am deeply honored to receive the 2001 Fulbright Prize for International Understanding. I am particularly pleased to receive an award named after J. William Fulbright, a visionary statesman and a founder and supporter of the United Nations. His belief in the values of the United Nations Charter and his commitment to securing peace through cooperation inspires us even today.

The Fulbright Exchange Program is a model for the kind of dialogue among cultures and civilizations that the United Nations has been promoting around the world. Today, perhaps more than ever, international understanding is essential to world peace — understanding between faiths, between nations, between cultures.

Today we know that just as no nation is immune to conflict or suffering, no nation can defend itself alone. We need each other as friends, as allies, as partners, in our struggle to uphold our common values and to fulfill our common needs. The United Nations at its best can be the true home of the dialogue among civilizations, the forum where such dialogue can flourish and promote genuine understanding. Without this dialogue taking place every day, among all nations, within and between civilizations, cultures, and groups, we will not be able to overcome the wounds of 11 September. That is a lesson in almost every part of the world but nowhere more so today than in Afghanistan, a country devastated by decades of war, drought, and political oppression driven by ethnic and other differences.

We have learned from painful experience that authoritarian and highly personalized governments, and of course, ethnic discrimination and human rights violations, have been at the root of that country’s conflicts. Conversely we have learned that only democratic governments, by protecting minorities, encouraging political pluralism, and upholding the rule of law, can channel internal dissent peacefully and thus help avert the kind of civil war that has taken such a heavy toll on the people of Afghanistan during the last quarter century.

Afghanistan is but one of many conflicts in the world today that deserve our concern and our compassion and solidarity. We must remember, also, that the main challenges facing the international community before 10 September have not gone away.

My dear friends, the appalling terrorist attacks on this country on 11 September focused the world’s attention on the reality that a collapsed and destitute state such as Afghanistan...
provides fertile ground for armed groups to plan and prepare unspeakable acts of terror at home and abroad. It must bring home a second lesson and a second reality, too. The answer to such violence and to the sources of grievance, which provide an excuse for such acts, is more democracy, not less, more freedom, not less, more development aid, not less, and more solidarity for the poor and dispossessed of our world, not less.

The United Nations is urgently engaged in helping Afghanistan embark on a new beginning. First and foremost, we must do all we can to help meet the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people. Winter has already set in, and we must feed and shelter as many of the 7.5 million Afghans who are vulnerable and suffering as possible.

Beyond this, and beyond this most urgent need, as we are all aware, my special representative Lakhdar Brahimi has been hosting talks in Bonn aimed at producing a basic agreement on the establishment of an interim administration that is acceptable to all Afghans and accountable to all Afghans. If all the Afghan parties as well as their neighbors and the wider international community give their full support, there is now a real opportunity to create the sort of broad-based, fully representative government that the United Nations has been trying to help the Afghan people achieve for a long, long time. A stable Afghanistan, living at peace, protecting the rights of its people, carrying out its international obligations, denying terrorists a safe haven, and posing no threat to its neighbors and enjoying their respect and support must be our common objective. To achieve it, any arrangement arrived at must reflect the will and the needs and the interests of the Afghan people and enjoy their full support.

Afghanistan is but one of many conflicts in the world today that deserve our concern and our compassion and solidarity. We must remember, also, that the main challenges facing the international community before 10 September have not gone away. Indeed, they have become more urgent, whether it is the devastation wrought by AIDS, the continuing poverty that afflicts billions of our fellow men and women, or the environmental degradation that threatens all peoples and all nations.

I believe critical to addressing these obstacles in an effective and a lasting way is a far greater understanding of the bonds that exist across all boundaries. The Fulbright Association has made an immense contribution to the kind of knowledge and appreciation that is necessary to sustain and deepen that solidarity. I salute your contribution and wish you all success in the future. Thank you very much.
The seventh secretary-general of the United Nations and the first to be elected from the ranks of United Nations staff, Kofi A. Annan began his term on January 1, 1997. Mr. Annan's priorities have been to revitalize the United Nations through negotiating with Iraq on the sale of oil to fund purchases of humanitarian aid. Mr. Annan also served as assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping operations and as under-secretary-general. From 1995 to 1996, following the Dayton Peace Agreement ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he was the special representative of the secretary-general to the former Yugoslavia.

As secretary-general, Mr. Annan's first major initiative was his plan for reform, "Renewing the United Nations," with an emphasis on improving coherence and coordination. He has used his office in several delicate political situations. These include a mission in 1998 to help promote the transition to civilian rule in Nigeria; diplomacy in 1999 to forge an international response to violence in East Timor; the certification of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000; and further efforts, since the renewed outbreak of violence, to encourage Israelis and Palestinians to resolve their differences through peaceful negotiations.

He has also sought to improve the status of women in the secretariat and to build closer partnerships with civil society, the private sector, and other non-state actors. His 2000 Millennium Report, "We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century," called on member states to commit themselves to an action plan for ending poverty and inequality, improving education, reducing HIV/AIDS, safeguarding the environment, and protecting peoples from deadly conflict and violence.

In April 2001, the secretary-general issued a "Call to Action" to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which he described as his "personal priority," and proposed the establishment of a Global AIDS and Health Fund to serve as a mechanism for some of the increased spending needed to help developing countries confront the crisis.

Mr. Annan is married to Nane Annan. They have three children.
Remarks by Charles H. Harff, President, Fulbright Association

In the events of this fall, the Fulbright Association and its 6,500 members have gained a new resolve in our commitment to the Fulbright Program of international educational and cultural exchanges. A private, not-for-profit organization, the Fulbright Association is supported not only by individual Fulbright alumni and friends, but by more than 165 colleges and universities and international organizations.

An integral part of the Fulbright Association’s program is the clear articulation of the critical role our Congress has in providing the funding necessary to ensure that Senator Fulbright’s vision remains as vital today as when he conceived the program. All of us who have received Fulbright grants believe that people and nations must gain greater mutual understanding of cross-cultural differences to promote peace and to improve the quality of life for all of us who share this globe. We know the Fulbright Program is a powerful tool in achieving these goals.

The Fulbright Prize recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions toward furthering mutual understanding among peoples who have helped break barriers that divide humankind. The Fulbright Prize laureates exemplify the purposes of the international educational and cultural exchange program created by the late Senator Fulbright.

The Fulbright Prize Selection Committee made its choice in July, selecting as our laureate the same distinguished leader who, together with the United Nations, will receive the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize.

Our 2001 Fulbright Prize Laureate has led the United Nations since 1997. He has strengthened the UN’s political work and development in maintenance of international peace and security, he has advocated human rights as well as the rule of law and the universal values of equality, tolerance, and human dignity. He has sharpened the world’s focus on the need to address vigorously and to dedicate meaningful resources to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. He has provided leadership to essential efforts to improve education and investment in developing countries, and he has restored public confidence in one of the world’s greatest international organizations by reaching out to new partners. For his work in conflict resolution and his promotion of international cooperation and peace, the Fulbright Association is honored to present the 2001 Fulbright Prize to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Remarks by Douglas N. Daft, Chairman and CEO, The Coca-Cola Company

Kofi Annan is truly a man of peace, a man who works tirelessly in these very difficult times to create a world in which we all may live free of fear. And he challenges us, in his efforts to ensure the health, education, and safety of all the world’s people. He puts forth these challenges thoughtfully and with persuasion.

When the Coca-Cola Company hosted a forum on the United Nations AIDS Initiative in June, Secretary-General Annan said, “The assembled business leaders represented one of the greatest forces in the world.”

And then came the challenge, as he added, “You’ve never been fully utilized in the campaign against HIV and AIDS. It’s high time that we tap your strength to the fullest.”

Kofi Annan’s message is simple, and it’s clear. Whatever measure of resources and influence we possess, we must, as human beings, use it for the good of the world. As Senator Fulbright emphasized throughout his career, it is understanding that brings us peace. Kofi Annan embodies that ideal. Therefore, it is fitting that he receive the Fulbright Prize and, next week, the Nobel Peace Prize.

But the greatest reward of all to him consists of the lives that will be saved and the lives that will be made better and a world that will be safer and more just because of his dedication to this ideal of understanding.

It’s now my privilege to present His Excellency Kofi Annan with a sculpture which is emblematic of the Fulbright Prize. Created by our own Atlanta artist Sergio Dolfi, the artwork is called “Tribute,” which is only fitting to today’s activities.
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(All prices include U.S. shipping and handling. Please add $5 per item for merchandise shipped overseas.)

$ ___ Fulbright Tie – Navy with red diagonal stripes, 100% silk, featuring Sen. Fulbright’s signature. ($35 members, $40 nonmembers.)

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$ ___ Fulbright Association Limoges-style box – 2 1/2” x 1 1/2”, blue and white, featuring the Association’s logo. ($35 members, $40 nonmembers.)

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Kofi Annan Receives 2001 Fulbright Prize
(continued from page 1)

Secretary-General Annan was selected in July to receive the 2001
Fulbright Prize for his work in conflict resolution and his promotion of
international cooperation and peace.

Former House International Relations Committee Chairman Lee
Hamilton, who chaired the international Fulbright Prize selection committee,
said, "Kofi Annan is a most deserving winner of the 2001 Fulbright Prize.
During his outstanding tenure as UN Secretary-General, Mr. Annan has
reinvigorated and transformed the world's pre-eminent international institution.
He has enhanced the UN's capacity to promote and preserve international
peace, streamlined UN operations to make them more efficient and effective,
and initiated important new efforts to partner with the private sector and
nongovernmental organizations.

Mr. Annan's strong leadership and unsurpassed diplomatic skill have
contributed tremendously to the resolution of many dangerous conflicts
and to the advancement of international cooperation and peace.

The Fulbright Association created the Fulbright Prize in 1993 with a grant
from The Coca-Cola Foundation to recognize individuals who have made
extraordinary contributions toward bringing peoples, cultures, or nations to
greater understanding of others.

Previous Fulbright Prize laureates are
former South African President Nelson
Mandela; former United States President
Jimmy Carter; former Austrian Federal
Chancellor Franz Vranitzky; former
Philippine President Corazon Aquino;
Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel;
former Chilean President Patricio
Aylwin Azocar; United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights Mary
Robinson; and former President of
Finland Martti Ahtisaari.

Fulbright Association President
Charles H. Harff said, "The Fulbright
Association is honored to award the
2001 J. William Fulbright Prize for
International Understanding to
Kofi Annan, whose distinguished career
at the United Nations, particularly as
secretary-general, has exemplified
fostering international understanding
through exchange, the principle on
which the Fulbright scholarship
program is based."

In June, Mr. Annan was
unanimously reappointed for a second
term as secretary-general, an action by
189 member states unprecedented in
United Nations history. His key
initiatives include reform of the United
Nations, programs for women, efforts to
combat HIV/AIDS, and promotion of
peace and prosperity in Africa.

Mr. Annan and the United Nations
have also built a strong foundation to
increase international cooperation and
action against terrorism.

"The 11 September attacks were
assaults on humanity, and humanity
must respond to them as one,"
Mr. Annan has said. "Every nation and
every people have a responsibility to
fight against terrorism by ensuring that
differences and disputes are resolved
through political means, and not
through violence."

The international committee
convened by the Fulbright Association
to select the 2001 Fulbright Prize
laureate was comprised of Chairman
Lee Hamilton; Prof. Ana Anton-Pacheco,
Universidad Complutense, Madrid;
Dr. R. Fenton-May, a member
of the Fulbright Association's
Board of Directors; His Excellency
Yoshio Okawara, president of the
Institute of International Policy
Studies, Tokyo; and Her Excellency
Beatriz M. Ramacciotti, ambassador
and permanent representative of Peru
to the Organization of American States

Prof. Ana Anton-Pacheco,
Dr. Fenton-May, Ambassador
Yoshio Okawara, and Ambassador
Beatriz M. Ramacciotti all received
Fulbright grants to the United States.